UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ICEF/1996/P/L.61
29 February 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

FOR INFORMATION

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
Second regular session 1996
9-12 April 1996
Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda*

THE UNICEF APPROACH TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES AND THE BALTIC STATES

SUMMARY

The present report outlines the UNICEF approach to Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States. It discusses the UNICEF mandate and activities in the region to date, lessons learned and the regional approach to be employed. The approach will centre on social sector service delivery, public policy and systems reform and strengthening civil society and public institutions. The issue of emergencies is also addressed by the approach, as are cooperation with international partners and fund-raising.

The proposed UNICEF support structure will consist of a regional office, to be located in Geneva, as well as several area and liaison offices, country offices and National Committees for UNICEF.

* E/ICEF/1996/9.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The main problems of children and women in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic States stem from the dramatic decline in living standards associated with the political, social and economic transition undergone by the region since 1989. While Central European countries recently have fared reasonably well, elsewhere household incomes have fallen substantially and public finances are at a level which can no longer sustain basic services. The resulting negative effect on human welfare can be gauged by the decline in a variety of support services for families, including preschools and access to medical care; by the dramatic drop in the participation of women in the labour force; and by the massive increase in youth crime. The situation is further complicated by outbreaks of war and civil conflict, which have resulted in millions of refugees and displaced persons. A resurgence of epidemics has added to the misery. With an average 40-50 per cent increase in poverty rates in countries outside Central Europe, more and more families are facing challenges to their very survival, in addition to having to assume the burden of serious reductions in health care and other essential services previously provided by Governments.

II. THE UNICEF MANDATE AND ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION TO DATE

2. UNICEF has been working in the region since 1990, when the Executive Board first approved programme support for Central and Eastern Europe, CIS and the Baltic States. This mandate was established in Executive Board decisions 1990/5 (E/ICEF/1990/13), 1991/20 (E/ICEF/1991/15) and 1992/19 (E/ICEF/1992/14). Reports on programme development and other cooperation in the region were submitted to the Executive Board for review in 1994 and 1995 (E/ICEF/1994/4 and E/ICEF/1995/P/L.2). A report on the UNICEF policy in the region also was submitted to the Board at its second regular session of 1994 (E/ICEF/1994/L.12)

3. UNICEF now has country programmes in 16 countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). In addition, UNICEF has been using a regional fund, together with limited supplementary funds and other emergency-related contributions, to carry out advocacy and other activities in 11 other countries (Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine). These countries have not had a regular UNICEF staff presence. Emergency activities have been carried out in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), in the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), in the Russian Federation (for the Chechnya emergency in Dagestan, North Ossetia and Ingushetia) and in the republics of the former Yugoslavia (primarily as part of a United Nations inter-agency appeal). In addition, UNICEF, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the World Health Organization (WHO), launched a regional diphtheria control programme. Other regional activities have included the regional project on monitoring the transition in Central and Eastern Europe, known as the "MONEE" reports, managed by the International Child Development Centre (ICDC) in Florence, Italy, and now partially supported by the World Bank, and undertaken in close cooperation with national statistical offices.

4. UNICEF allocations to the region in 1995 totalled some $89 million ($21 million in general resources and $68 million in supplementary funds and emergency contributions).

III. LESSONS LEARNED TO DATE

5. Since beginning its programme cooperation in the region in 1990, UNICEF has amassed a wealth of experience and knowledge about the problems, challenges and priorities facing children and women. Major lessons learned are as follows:

(a) The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all countries in the region, carries significant weight with Governments and provides a valuable foundation and framework for UNICEF work with Governments and civil institutions and other partners;

(b) Limited UNICEF general resources for this large and populous region require that UNICEF efforts be primarily catalytic in nature, seeking to mobilize action and resources from Governments, other donors and civil society;

(c) UNICEF must continue to build partnerships and coalitions to address children's issues, especially with other United Nations agencies, the international financial institutions, the European Union, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and bilateral donors;

(d) UNICEF must build on the region's past achievements and its wealth of basic infrastructures and human resources;

(e) There should be an emphasis on assisting countries to develop a civil society, with the family at its centre, in order to sustain efforts for children and to support the creation of societies in which children's needs and rights are a priority;

(f) UNICEF should link its emergency-related activities in the region to a developmental approach. This includes making the best use of local capacities to meet emergency needs and to reduce the vulnerability of children in any future emergency situations. It also includes the rapid establishment of education as an essential emergency service and the social reintegration of children who are in need of special protection and care;

(g) UNICEF should focus on policy and systems reform, using data collection and analysis as a critical tool to help Governments assess the impact of their legislation and actions on children and youth and to redesign their approaches to achieve maximum benefit;

(h) To be most effective, UNICEF requires an established presence in the countries of the region, including a modest but strategic presence in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which have the largest child populations. Given the important role of the Russian Federation in the region, a senior UNICEF presence in the Russian Federation is essential;

(i) Regional-level efforts are required for the development of international partnerships, the mobilization of resources and operational support.

IV. REGIONAL APPROACH

6. In view of the realities in the region, the challenge for UNICEF is to devise ways and means of ensuring that the rights of children are uppermost on the agenda as countries continue to reshape and redefine the ways their societies are structured and organized. The underlying principle of the UNICEF

approach to the region is to work with Governments and other partners to safeguard some achievements of the past, while simultaneously building on existing strengths in human resources and physical infrastructure. The complex problems encountered in this region pose a special challenge to UNICEF and require close linkages between development and emergency activities, as well as coordination and collaboration between local and international partners. UNICEF will use its limited resources in a catalytic manner to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the ongoing reforms for redefining policies and strengthening capacities to benefit all children up to 18 years of age.

7. With all countries in the region having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF has a specific role in providing support to Governments to implement its articles. Advantage will be taken of the growing national and international movements in favour of child rights to identify experiences and resources to support States Parties in meeting their commitments and reporting obligations.

8. UNICEF will continue to assist countries to develop and update situation analyses as one way of ensuring that all rights of all children up to 18 years of age be considered and that UNICEF resources remain focused on the most critical needs and opportunities in each country. UNICEF also will assist countries to prepare and implement national programmes of action (NPAs) for children, building on the political commitment made at the World Summit for Children.

9. Conscious of the strong ethnic, cultural, geographic and economic links between some of the countries of the region, UNICEF will seek to develop its programmes of cooperation taking into consideration area situations, e.g., south-eastern Europe, the Caucasus and the Central Asian republics. These could include the development of subregional initiatives in such areas as immunization, disease control and education. UNICEF already has had experience with this approach within the region (the Aral Sea project, the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asian republics polio campaign and the diphtheria immunization campaign) as well as in other parts of the world (Central America and the Andean countries).

10. All countries of the region are to have a UNICEF presence, either in the form of a country office or a National Committee for UNICEF. Thus, at the regional level, UNICEF would function primarily within an operational framework designed to give maximum support to the development and implementation of country strategies. In view of the vastness, diversity and heterogeneity of the region, strategies will necessarily be country-specific, but will follow UNICEF approaches that take greatest advantage of its experience and strengths. These can be grouped into the following categories: (a) support to social sector service delivery; (b) public policy and systems reform; and (c) strengthening of civil society and public institutions.

11. These categories are closely interlinked. For example, the specific support provided by UNICEF to meet the urgent needs of children also should support measures to introduce policy reform. Likewise, work in support of strengthening institutions in civil society needs to go hand in hand with policy reform aimed at increasing direct participation in the development and provision of services. UNICEF also will be involved in emergency interventions that cut across all three categories.

12. The overriding characteristic of the region is transition, a process of change with varying impact on children, depending on the country and the sector. This means that UNICEF must remain flexible and ready to shift emphasis among programme categories as events warrant.

A. Support to social sector service delivery

13. The deterioration and disappearance of many of the large-scale social safety nets which existed previously in the region have been a source of hardship for many families. In addition, populations in such countries as the Republic of Moldova and Romania have seen their incomes decline by up to 70 per cent since 1989. This combination of factors has left large populations vulnerable to malnutrition, epidemics and other threats to survival, protection and development, and in need of urgent, direct interventions. Because the cost of curative health care is now being assumed by the patient, a large proportion of the population is effectively excluded from treatment. For example, a 1995 survey in Georgia revealed that 33 per cent of people were prevented from seeking needed medical care because of the cost, and a further 21 per cent could only afford partial care.

14. Approaches will support interventions to help reach children and/or women with specific, urgent services (e.g., immunization, maternal and child health services, universal iodization of salt and campaigns against acute respiratory infections, cholera and diarrhoeal diseases). They also will support efforts to help improve protection for specific, defined groups of children, i.e., working children and street children and youth, children of minority groups, children and youth in conflict with the law, adolescents facing risks such as drug abuse and AIDS, and children affected by war, including those who have experienced severe trauma.

B. Public policy and systems reform

15. The region has extensive financial, human and institutional resources to deal with the challenges facing its population. Often, however, the hardships of economic, social and political transition have led to the deterioration of these resources and structures. New governmental policies and approaches are needed urgently to ensure that the increasing burdens of transition do not fall disproportionately on children and women.

16. Together with other partners, UNICEF will assist the staff of national institutions, many of whom have been relatively isolated from new technological and/or policy developments, to review and redesign national policies, legislation, standards and systems and to ensure that they are conducive to the respect and fulfilment of children's rights. UNICEF will emphasize especially the need to ensure that the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child - the best interest of the child, non-discrimination, participation, survival and development - are given the necessary attention.

17. The role of UNICEF will include promoting regional cooperation and exchange of experiences between countries in the region, as well as with countries in other regions facing similar challenges. It also may entail assisting Governments in presenting social concerns to such international financial institutions as the World Bank and to such multilateral and bilateral donors as the European Union and the development agencies of donor countries in order to help ensure that their lending and contributions give proper consideration to the rights of children and to their fulfilment. Cooperation with partners, both at national and international levels, also will be central

in providing support to the implementation of reforms which will often require reorientation, retraining and strengthening of capacity on a decentralized basis.

18. Central to the process of policy and system reform will be monitoring the situation of children and women, with the greatest possible participation of officials who make decisions affecting social sector policy, as well as opinion leaders and civic institutions. In this respect, UNICEF will continue its support for the production of national reports, including situation analyses, NPAs and regional studies such as "MONEE" and a database developed by ICDC on the status of children in the region (the "TRANSMONEE" database).

19. In accordance with Article 45 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF intends to support Governments' preparation of reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This creates a new opportunity for UNICEF to stimulate and support national debates on the reform of policies and legislation. Moreover, the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations provide guidance for Governments and have implications for UNICEF programmes of assistance.

20. Within the broad area of policy and systems reform, special emphasis will continue to be given to the critical area of health, focusing especially on access to health services and information by children, youth and women. Working together with WHO, the World Bank, the European Union and others, UNICEF will assist Governments to assess more accurately the health needs of children and women and to design appropriate, cost-effective policies and systems to respond to those needs. In this respect, health sector reform will not be seen as limited to policies and practices of ministries of health, but will be viewed holistically to include, as appropriate, ministries of economy and finance as well as government agencies and others working at central and local levels in the areas of water and environmental sanitation, social protection and information.

21. In line with the principle of capacity-strengthening, procurement of supplies and equipment is undertaken with the objective of supporting the existing capacities of the countries of the region. UNICEF will undertake a review of the capacity of manufacturers in the region to ensure that its procurement policies strengthen local enterprises.

C. Strengthening civil society and public institutions

22. In the countries of the region, "civil society" - the complex group of social movements, NGOs, the media, the private sector, religious and civic groups, trade unions and even the family - is generally underdeveloped. Civil society, therefore, is unable to assume the roles of advocacy, social service delivery and fund-raising it normally plays in most other pluralistic societies. Special emphasis will be placed on both the status of women and the particular situation of adolescents of countries in transition. Approaches to be used will empower children, adolescents and women, both by emphasizing their right to participation and by making their concerns and problems central to the social agenda of all civil society. This may take the form of fostering people's involvement in the assessment and analysis of local problems and either taking direct action or effectively demanding the services required from others. It also may entail encouraging the establishment of innovative institutions at the country level such as an ombudsperson for children.

23. The direct empowerment of families also will be pursued by fostering their access to critical information, including Facts for Life, which will enable them to take steps to improve their own health and well-being. This will include "healthy lifestyle" issues of particular importance for adolescents such as the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse, as well as AIDS and teenage pregnancy.

24. By providing support for the preparation of reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF will promote a process that involves the fostering of greater respect, commitment and mobilization of resources for children's rights and provides an opportunity for a dynamic exchange between Governments and institutions of civil society.

25. UNICEF will provide support to local NGOs (e.g., the Latvian Children's Fund, Romanian Salvatii Copiii (Save the Children)) in the areas of policy analysis and development, management, advocacy and service delivery, thus helping them to be effective partners with Governments and families in ensuring improved welfare for children and women. Where no or only a few NGOs exist, UNICEF may work with relevant groups to establish new national NGOs or umbrella groups. In both cases, particular attention will be given to groups addressing children's issues and factors responsible for the decline of women's status and role in society. Activities also will aim to strengthen mass electronic and print media through training to better analyse and report on the problems of children and women and on innovative solutions to those problems. UNICEF also will work with international NGOs to help mobilize other partners and allies for children.

26. UNICEF recognizes the need to work with civil society in promoting peace and conflict resolution at regional, national, community and family levels. Experience to date in education for peace within and outside the region will provide guidance in developing this activity in conjunction with other partners.

27. Ultimately, the resources needed for social services, advocacy and other efforts on behalf of children and women will have to be generated locally. Therefore, UNICEF will support activities that build the capacity of NGOs and others to generate or mobilize action for children on a sustainable basis.

V. EMERGENCIES

28. The region is recognized as particularly prone to both man-made emergencies - civil strife, international conflicts and environmental catastrophes - and such natural disasters as earthquakes and floods. In some countries, the rapidly deteriorating economic situation at times takes on the proportions of an emergency because of the serious repercussions affecting children's survival - as with the major deterioration of vaccine production and the cold chain - and development.

29. UNICEF emergency interventions, although focused on the most urgent needs of children and women, will be designed as a part of the development and transitional activities undertaken in the affected countries. Emergencies should be seen as realities affecting the lives of children and, possibly, as requiring an adaptation of the UNICEF mode of intervention without changing the global long-term objectives of the well-being of children. Thus, UNICEF will give special attention to activities fostering early recovery and stabilization (e.g. psycho-social rehabilitation, reform of education and health systems, and education for development). Overall, UNICEF will advocate the respect of child rights and the protection of those most at risk.

30. UNICEF acknowledges the importance of improving prevention, early warning and preparedness activities. Experience gained in some countries of the region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Caucasus countries, will foster these efforts. Preparedness will imply the reinforcement of the crisis management capacity of local partners and UNICEF offices.

VI. COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

31. Since it began its work in the region, UNICEF has worked closely with other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, international NGOs and other multilateral and bilateral donors. UNICEF has collaborated extensively with the United States Agency for International Development, as well as with Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries and many National Committees for UNICEF. UNICEF has collaborated especially closely with the European Union.

32. UNICEF continues to work closely with the other United Nations agencies under the umbrella of the resident coordinator system. UNICEF works closely with the United Nations Population Fund (notably in Albania and Romania); with the World Bank (notably in Romania, Turkey and the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan); with WHO; and with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on emergencies. In addition, UNICEF already has begun to work closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the preparation and follow-up of national human development reports, both in terms of producing social statistics and using the social sector analysis of these reports to advocate changes in policy.

33. In the areas of social sector policy and systems reform, UNICEF will work even more closely than in the past with all the major donors. In view of the importance of the World Bank's large lending programmes on overall social sector policies, intensified collaboration with the World Bank is of particular importance and has already begun. UNICEF also will increase its cooperation with international centres of excellence along the model developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Strengthening cooperation with all major partners, in line with each one's comparative advantages, will be a major concern as UNICEF activities in the region are consolidated.

VII. REGIONAL FUND-RAISING STRATEGY

34. UNICEF has sought to mobilize supplementary funds already earmarked for the region or its constituent countries, often from the budgets of donor Governments' ministries of foreign affairs rather than their development agencies. This strategy has been relatively successful, given the high interest in the region. By developing partnerships, UNICEF will seek to mobilize other earmarked funds which might not pass through UNICEF accounts, but which could none the less be used to benefit children and women. Perhaps of greatest importance, UNICEF will seek to mobilize local resources, both governmental and from the private sector. The latter approach will require a synthesis of UNICEF programming and fund-raising activities similar to that successfully established in other transitional countries.

VIII. PROPOSED UNICEF SUPPORT STRUCTURE

35. In accordance with Executive Board decision 1994/R.2/9 (E/ICEF/1994/13/Rev.1), the Executive Director proposes to establish a regional structure during 1996 to provide supervision and programme support to UNICEF activities in the region. The new regional office for Central and Eastern Europe, CIS and the Baltic States, to be located in Geneva, will implement and support the approach for UNICEF support in countries outlined in the present report.

36. Like other regional offices, the new regional office is expected to provide direct support to country offices responsible for the management of country programmes. Area offices will provide direct technical and operational support. Area offices already exist for the countries of the former Yugoslavia and for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, and a new area office will be established in Bucharest for the Republic of Moldova and Romania. The concept of grouping countries by area also will be used for the liaison offices, so that the proposed office located in the Russian Federation will provide support to those ir Belarus and Ukraine.

37. Unlike other UNICEF regional offices, this one will plan and manage UNICEF programme assistance to a significant number of countries that do not have regular country programmes. This assistance will continue to be supported from a regional fund. Activities will include the completion of situation analyses and the preparation of NPAs; intensified support for the process of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child; selected regional studies and surveys on specific child-related issues; continuation of the "MONEE" project and national application of its findings and recommendations; intensified cooperation with NGOs, including exchange of experience and follow-up related to the mid-decade goals and goals for the year 2000; and establishment of systems for the prevention of epidemics, in collaboration with WHO. These efforts will be planned and carried out, as appropriate, with the National Committees for UNICEF in the concerned countries.

38. The regional office will support UNICEF activities in 27 countries, including 16 existing full country offices, 3 new liaison offices and 8 countries with National Committees but without a UNICEF field office presence. The countries are as follows:

(a) Existing country offices: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

(b) New liaison offices: Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine;

(c) Countries with National Committees for UNICEF: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia.

39. As part of its support to each country and to the region as a whole, the regional office will carry out regional-level activities of central importance for the mobilization of resources for the women and children of the region. These activities, which include fund-raising, the development of joint programmes with other organizations and the monitoring of regional trends, will entail establishing and strengthening partnerships with other institutions operating in the region. The regional office will help to consolidate and strengthen collaboration with the United Nations system, working with other

agencies to ensure that children's rights are duly considered as the overall United Nations effort in the region is further developed and refined. Especially close coordination is envisioned with DHA, UNDP, UNHCR, WHO and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Geneva location is particularly appropriate for these activities since the largest number of key international and bilateral entities within and beyond the United Nations system are represented in Geneva.

40. The regional office will be divided into four main sections: (a) the Policy and Service Delivery Support Section; (b) the Capacity-Building and Empowerment Support Section; (c) the Evaluation Section; and (d) the Operations Support and Oversight Section. The latter is considered particularly necessary for strengthening the operational performance of many of the new country offices in the region.

41. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Executive Board decision 1994/R.2/9, maximum effort has been made to design a regional office that can provide the support that UNICEF experience in the region has shown to be necessary while keeping new staffing requirements to a minimum. While the new regional office will be headed by a regional director who will report to the Executive Director, it will share administrative and other support services with the existing Geneva Office. Additionally, the start-up and full operation of the office in Geneva will be much more rapid than in a location where UNICEF has little or no operational expertise or presence.

42. With the Emergency Operations Section in the existing Geneva Office, the regional office will not need to establish a separate capacity to support countries in emergency situations. Full advantage also will be taken of the existing expertise in areas relating to support to National Committees for UNICEF, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and NGOs, as well as in information and education for development. The regional office also will draw on the expertise of ICDC staff, working jointly on the monitoring of regional social and economic trends affecting women and children and in the areas of children in especially difficult circumstances and psycho-social trauma. In view of these factors, the proposed regional office will be staffed by some 10 international Professional and 7 General Service staff, compared to roughly twice that number of total staff in other regional offices. Contingent on the availability of supplementary funds, additional support will be established for the areas of health, water and environmental sanitation and strengthening of civil society.

UNITED
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Distr.
LIMITED

E/ICEF/1996/P/L.62
15 March 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
Second regular session 1996
9-12 April 1996
Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

FOR ACTION

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Extension of cooperation with Rotary International for polio eradication and extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative

SUMMARY

The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the following:

(a) A five-year extension of the programme of cooperation with the PolioPlus programme of Rotary International for the period 1996 to 2000, in accordance with the original Board document (E/ICEF/1990/P/L.35), and an increase of $60 million in the supplementary funding programme amount, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions from Rotary International;

(b) A five-year extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative for the period 1996 to 2000, in accordance with the terms of the original Board document (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41), without any changes.

* E/ICEF/1996/9.

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I. EXTENSION OF COOPERATION WITH ROTARY INTERNATIONAL FOR POLIO ERADICATION

1. In 1990, the Executive Board approved a five-year programme of cooperation with the PolioPlus programme of Rotary International (E/ICEF/1990/P/L.35) to provide support to national immunization programmes for polio eradication activities from 1990 to 1994 (E/ICEF/1990/13, decision 1990/8). Since the inception of this programme, Rotary International has provided over $100 million to UNICEF and has been one of the most important donors in supporting routine and now supplemental vaccine needs for polio eradication activities.

2. Since 1980, the number of polio cases reported annually has decreased from 400,000 to under 4,000 in 1995. Rotary International has indicated its long-standing and close working relationship with UNICEF. Rotary International expects to contribute $60 million to UNICEF from 1995 to 2000 for the purchase of oral polio vaccine.

3. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve a five-year extension of the programme of cooperation with the PolioPlus programme of Rotary International for the period 1996 to 2000, in accordance with the original Board document (E/ICEF/1990/P/L.35), and an increase of $60 million in the supplementary funding programme amount, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions from Rotary International.

II. EXTENSION OF THE VACCINE INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE

4. In 1991, the Executive Board approved the establishment of the Vaccine Independence Initiative (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41), an interregional programme to create and capitalize a revolving fund to enhance the ability of developing countries to procure, with their own currencies, high-quality, low-cost vaccines in quantities adequate to reach and sustain universal child immunization and the disease control goals of the decade. The programme was approved for the period 1991-1995 in the amount of $10 million in supplementary funds, subject to availability of specific-purpose contributions (E/ICEF/1991/15, decision 1991/12).

5. Since its establishment, the Vaccine Independence Initiative has made good progress. The programme has been well received by both beneficiary countries and donors, and continues to play an important role in increasing the financial sustainability of national immunization programmes, a key UNICEF objective.

6. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve a five-year extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative for the period 1996 to 2000, in accordance with the terms of the original Board document (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41), without any changes, so that it may continue to offer countries the possibility of procuring vaccines with their own currencies to meet global disease control goals.